

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
COUNTY OF BRONX

Index No.

Purchased \_\_\_\_\_

-----X  
SERENA FELDER,

Plaintiff,

-against-

VERIFIED COMPLAINT

THE CITY OF NEW YORK, NEW YORK CITY  
POLICE OFFICER CHRISTOPHER VACCARO OF  
THE 46<sup>th</sup> PCT., SHIELD #3957 AND P.O.  
VACCARO'S PARTNER ON JULY 5, 2011 UNDER  
DOCKET #2011BX037793 S/H/A JOHN/JANE DOE I,  
Defendants  
-----X

SERENA FELDER, by her attorneys, PAPA, DEPAOLA AND BROUNSTEIN,  
respectfully alleges as follows:

AS AND FOR A FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

1. At all times mentioned, Plaintiff SERENA FELDER was a resident of Bronx County, City and State of New York.
2. At all times mentioned, Defendant CITY OF NEW YORK, was and is a municipal corporation duly organized and existing by virtue of the laws of the State of New York.
3. On or about the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of October, 2011 and within ninety (90) days after the claim herein arose, the Plaintiff served a Notice of Claim in writing sworn to on their behalf upon the Defendant CITY OF NEW YORK, by delivering a copy thereof in duplicate to the officer designated to receive such process personally, which Notice of Claim advised the Defendant CITY OF NEW YORK, of the nature, place, time and manner in which the claim arose, the items of damage and injuries sustained so far as was then determinable.

4. At least thirty (30) days have elapsed since the service of the claim prior to the commencement of this action and adjustment of payment thereof has been neglected or refused, and this action has been commenced within one year and ninety (90) days after the happening of the event upon which the claims are based.
5. The Plaintiff has complied with the request of the municipal Defendant's for an oral examination pursuant to Section 50-H of the General Municipal Law and/or the Public Authorities Law and/or no such request was made within the applicable period.
6. Upon information and belief, at all times mentioned, Defendants **NEW YORK CITY POLICE OFFICER CHRISTOPHER VACCARO OF THE 46<sup>th</sup> PCT., SHIELD #3957 AND P.O. VACCARO'S PARTNER ON JULY 5, 2011 UNDER DOCKET #2011BX037793 S/H/A JOHN/JANE DOE I**, were and are police officers of the Defendant City of New York, and at all times herein were acting in such capacity as the agents, servants and employees of the Defendant, **THE CITY OF NEW YORK**.
7. On or about July 5, 2011, at approximately 4:40 P.M. in the vicinity of 2244 Morris Avenue, County of Bronx, State of New York the Defendants jointly and severally in their capacity as police officers, wrongfully touched, grabbed, handcuffed and seized the Plaintiff **SERENA FELDER**, in an excessive manner about her person, causing her physical pain and mental suffering. At no time did the Defendants have legal cause to grab, handcuff seize or touch the Plaintiff, nor did the Plaintiff consent to this illegal touching nor was it privileged by law.

**AS AND FOR A SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION**

8. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates and re-alleges all of the allegations contained in Paragraphs "1" through "7" with full force and effect as though set forth at length herein.
9. On or about July 5, 2011, at approximately 4:40 P.M. in the vicinity of 2244 Morris Avenue, County of Bronx, State of New York the Defendants, jointly and severally did place Plaintiff **SERENA FELDER** in imminent fear of physical contact by approaching the Plaintiff with their loaded firearms, outstretched limbs and other objects which they used to physically seize, strike and restrain the Plaintiff. All of the above actions placed the Plaintiff in imminent fear of physical contact. At no time did the Plaintiff consent to the unlawful actions of the Defendants.

**AS AND FOR A THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION**

10. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates and re-alleges all of the allegations contained in Paragraphs "1" through "9" with full force and effect as though set forth at length herein.
11. On or about July 5, 2011, at approximately 4:40 P.M. in the vicinity of 2244 Morris Avenue, County of Bronx, State of New York the Defendants, jointly and severally without any warrant, order or other legal process and without any legal right, wrongfully and unlawfully arrested the Plaintiff, restrained her and her liberty and then took her into custody to a police station in the County of the Bronx and there charged her with the crimes on Docket No. 2011BX037793. The Plaintiff was thereafter held in custody over the course of approximately three (3) days until she was released on her own

recognizance. The Defendants intentionally confined the Plaintiff without her consent and the confinement was not otherwise privileged by law and, at all times, the Plaintiff was conscious of her confinement.

**AS AND FOR A FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

12. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates and re-alleges all of the allegations contained in Paragraphs "1" through "11" with full force and effect as though set forth at length herein.

13. On or about July 5, 2011, at approximately 4:40 P.M. in the vicinity of 2244 Morris Avenue, County of Bronx, State of New York the Defendants, jointly and severally without any valid warrant, order or other legal process and without any legal right, wrongfully and unlawfully imprisoned the Plaintiff, restrained her and her liberty and then took her into custody and causing her to be incarcerated as a detainee in the City of New York's Correctional Facility. The Plaintiff was thereafter held in custody over the course of approximately three (3) days before she was released. The Defendants intentionally confined the Plaintiff without her consent and the confinement was not otherwise privileged by law and, at all times, the Plaintiff was conscious of her confinement.

**AS AND FOR A FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

14. Plaintiff incorporates, repeats, and re-alleges all of the allegations contained in Paragraphs "1" through "13" with full force and effect as though set forth at length herein.

15. Upon information and belief, on or about July 5, 2011 and from that time until the dismissal of charges on or about September 21, 2011 which was a

favorable termination for the accused by the Honorable Judge presiding at, Bronx County Supreme Court, Defendants **NEW YORK CITY POLICE OFFICER CHRISTOPHER VACCARO OF THE 46<sup>th</sup> PCT., SHIELD #3957 AND P.O. VACCARO'S PARTNER ON JULY 5, 2011 UNDER DOCKET #2011BX037793 S/H/A JOHN/JANE DOE I**, deliberately and maliciously prosecuted Plaintiff **SERENA FELDER**, an innocent woman without any probable cause whatsoever, by filing or causing a criminal court complaint to be filed in the Criminal Court of the City of New York, Bronx County, for the purpose of falsely accusing the plaintiff of violations of the criminal laws of the State of New York.

16. The Defendants, jointly and severally, their agents, servants or employees failed to take reasonable steps to stop the prosecution of the Plaintiff and instead maliciously and deliberately provided false and/or incomplete information to the District Attorney's office to induce prosecution of the Plaintiff and due to the absence of probable cause malice can be inferred.
17. The commencement of these criminal proceedings under Docket No. 2011BX037793 was malicious and began in malice and without probable cause, so that the proceedings could succeed by the Defendants.
18. As a result of the malicious prosecution, Plaintiff was deprived of her liberty and suffered the humiliation, mental anguish, indignity and frustration of an unjust criminal prosecution. The Plaintiff made multiple court appearances to defend her liberty against these unjust charges.

**AS AND FOR A SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

19. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates, and re-alleges all of the allegations contained in paragraphs "1" through "18" as it set forth at length herein.
20. Defendants **NEW YORK CITY POLICE OFFICER CHRISTOPHER VACCARO OF THE 46<sup>th</sup> PCT., SHIELD #3957 AND P.O. VACCARO'S PARTNER ON JULY 5, 2011 UNDER DOCKET #2011BX037793 S/H/A JOHN/JANE DOE I** were at all times relevant, duly appointed and acting officers of the City of New York Police Department.
21. At all times mentioned herein, said police officers were acting under color of law, to wit: the statutes, ordinances, regulations, policies and customs and usage of the State of New York and/or City of New York.
22. Plaintiff **SERENA FELDER** is and at all times relevant herein, a citizen of the United States and a resident of Bronx County in the State of New York and brings this cause of action pursuant to 42 United States Code, Section 1983 and 42 United States Code, Section 1988.
23. The Defendant **CITY OF NEW YORK** is a municipality duly incorporated under the laws of the State of New York.
24. On or about July 5, 2011 the Defendants, armed police, while effectuating the seizure of the Plaintiff **SERENA FELDER**, did search, seize, assault and commit a battery and grab the person of the Plaintiff without a court authorized arrest or search warrant. They did physically seize the person of the Plaintiff during the arrest process in an unlawful and excessive manner. The Plaintiff was falsely arrested, unlawfully imprisoned and maliciously prosecuted without the Defendants possessing probable cause to do so.

25. The above action of the Defendants resulted in the Plaintiff being deprived of the following rights under the United States Constitution:
- a. Freedom from assault to her person;
  - b. Freedom from battery to her person;
  - c. Freedom from illegal search and seizure;
  - d. Freedom from false arrest;
  - e. Freedom from malicious prosecution;
  - f. Freedom from the use of excessive force during the arrest process;
  - g. Freedom from unlawful imprisonment.
26. The Defendants subjected the Plaintiff to such deprivations, either in a malicious or reckless disregard of the Plaintiff's rights or with deliberate indifference to those rights used the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution.
27. The direct and proximate result of the Defendants' acts are that the Plaintiff has suffered severe and permanent injuries of a psychological nature. She was forced to endure pain and suffering, all to her detriment.

**AS AND FOR A SEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

28. Plaintiff incorporates, repeats and re-alleges all of the allegations contained in Paragraphs "1" through "27" with full force and effect as though set forth at length herein.
29. Defendant **CITY OF NEW YORK** has grossly failed to train and adequately supervise its police officers in the fundamental law of arrest, search and seizure especially when its police officers are not in possession of a court authorized arrest warrant and where an individual, especially as here, has

not committed a crime and has not resisted arrest, that its police officers should only use reasonable force to effectuate an arrest and the arrest should be based on probable cause.

30. **THE CITY OF NEW YORK** was negligent by failing to implement a policy with its Police Department and instruct police officers who, absent the consent of the Plaintiff (or similarly situated individuals) or without the possession of a court authorized arrest a search warrant, said police officers of the City of New York are not to arrest individuals such as the Plaintiff here where probable cause is lacking and the use of force should only be reasonable when an individual resists arrest and should not be used where a criminal defendant is not resisting arrest.

31. **THE CITY OF NEW YORK** is negligent due to its failure to implement a policy with its Police Department or actively enforce the law, if any of the following are lacking:

1. Probable cause must be present before an individual such as the Plaintiff herein can be arrested.
2. Excessive force cannot be used against an individual who does not physically resist arrest.
3. An individual who sustains physical injury at the hands of the police during the arrest process should receive prompt medical attention.
4. An individual such as the plaintiff herein cannot be subjected to a strip search with cavity inspection unless the police possess legal cause and/or have a reasonable suspicion and/or probable cause that the plaintiff has secreted contraband in or on her person.

32. The foregoing acts, omissions and systemic failures are customs and policies of the **CITY OF NEW YORK** which caused the police officers to falsely arrest, maliciously prosecute, seize illegally and search the Plaintiff commit an assault/battery to his person and denied him prompt medical attention under the belief that they would suffer no disciplinary actions for their failure to take proper or prudent steps in this case.

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**AS AND FOR AN EIGHTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

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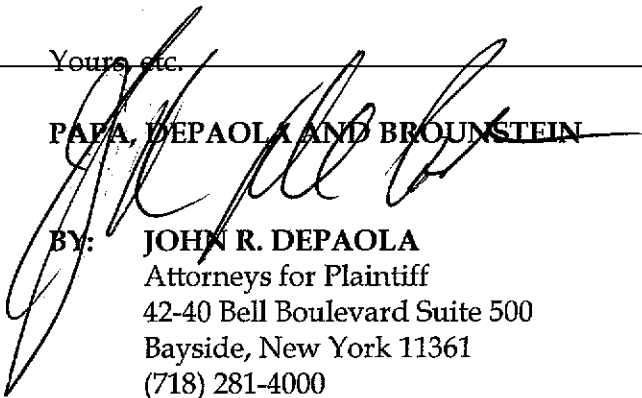
33. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates, and re-alleges all of the allegations contained in paragraphs "1" through "32" as it set forth at length herein.
34. Defendant **CITY OF NEW YORK** was negligent in that prior to and at the time of the acts complained of herein, due to the prior history of the Police Officer Defendants, knew or should have known of the bad disposition of said Defendants or had knowledge of facts that would put a reasonably prudent employer on inquiry concerning their bad disposition and the fact that these officers were not suitable to be hired and employed by the **CITY OF NEW YORK** and that due to their lack of training, these officers should have had adequate supervision so that they would not arrest innocent individuals nor use excessive force during the arrest process.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands judgment against the Defendants, together with the costs and disbursements of this action in the amount of damages greater than the jurisdictional limit of any lower court where otherwise have jurisdiction, together with attorneys' fees and costs for bringing this case and punitive damages.

Dated: Bayside, New York  
March 30, 2012

Yours, etc.

PAPA, DEPAOLA AND BROUNSTEIN

BY:  **JOHN R. DEPAOLA**  
Attorneys for Plaintiff  
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Bayside, New York 11361  
(718) 281-4000

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
COUNTY OF BRONX

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SERENA FELDER,

Plaintiff,

VERIFICATION

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK, NEW YORK CITY  
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DOCKET #2011BX037793 S/H/A JOHN/JANE DOE I,  
Defendants

-----X  
I, JOHN R. DEPAOLA, an attorney admitted to practice in the courts of New York State, state that I am a member of the firm of PAPA, DEPAOLA AND BROUNSTEIN, the attorneys of record for Plaintiffs in the within action; I have read the foregoing and know the contents thereof; the same is true to my own knowledge, except as to the matters therein stated to be alleged on information and belief, and as to those matters I believe it to be true. The reason this verification is made by me and not by Plaintiff is because Plaintiff resides outside the county where deponent maintains his office.

I affirm that the foregoing statements are true, under the penalties of perjury.

Dated: Bayside, New York  
March 30, 2012

  
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JOHN R. DEPAOLA

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SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
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Defendants

SUMMONS AND VERIFIED COMPLAINT

PAPA DEPAOLA AND BROUNSTEIN  
BY: JOHN R. DEPAOLA  
Attorney for Plaintiffs  
42-40 Bell Boulevard  
Bayside, NY 11361  
Tel. (718) 281-4000

To: CORPORATION COUNSEL OF NEW YORK CITY

Attorney(s) for Defendants

Service of a copy of the within is hereby admitted.

Dated

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Attorney(s) for